

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 16287 180320Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 CU-04 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7509

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16287

THE FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO USAF RADAR STATION
KO KHA, COMUSMACTHAI, UDORN, SONGHLA, CO DET III ARAG PHITS
OCT 17 RPTD TO YOU FND INFO:

QUOTE

CHIANG MAI 367

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TH, PINS

SUBJECT: CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

1. HAD DINNER CONVERSATION EVENING OF OCTOBER 16 WITH
PROFESSOR FROM CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY, MEDICAL DOCTOR DOING
CLINICAL RESEARCH AT SUAN DOK, AND MIDDLE GRADE CIVIL SERVANT.
WHILE NOT A STATISTICALLY VALID CROSS SECTION, THESE PEOPLE'S
ATTITUDES WERE FAIRLY UNIFORM AND PROBABLY REPRESENTATIVE OF
THOSE OF A NUMBER OF THAI OF SIMILAR BACKGROUNDS.

2. GROUP WAS UNIVERSAL IN ITS SENSE OF LOSS FOR THE STUDENTS THAT
WERE KILLED AND IN ITS SATISFACTION WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THE
SITUATION. THEY EXPRESSED SQIPORT FOR THE NEW GOVT AND WERE
PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE RELEVANCE OF SOME OF THE APPOINTMENTS,
I.E. MILITARY MAN IN MIN. DEFENSE, AND A DOCTOR IN PUBLIC
HEALTH. THEY MADE THE POINT QUITE STRONGLY THAT IT WAS A KING'S
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 16287 180320Z

GOVERNMENT AND WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THIS.

3. THROUGHOUT THE EVENING THEY EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH THE STUDENTS. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND SUPPORTED THIS REVOLUTION AND THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE PEOPLE HAD PARTICIPATED IN POLITICDRR. THEY CHARACTERIZED THE STUDENTS AS THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES. THEY CLEARLY BELIEVE THAT A NEW GROUP OF PLAYERS HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE POLITICAL GAME. WHEN PRESSED AS TO WHY SO MANY ADULTS SUPPORTED THE STUDENTS, THE DR. SAID, "ONE REASON IS THAT WE WERE ASHAMED. ASHAMED THAT WE HAD NOT EARLIER DONE SOMETHING OURSELVES."

4. WHEN ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT USE THE FORCE AT ITS COMMAND TO PUT DOWN THE STUDENTS, THEY ALL SAID THAT THAI SIMPLY WOULDN'T KILL THAI IN ANY GREAT NUMBERS. THEY POINTED OUT THAT CIVIL SERVANTS AND MANY MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS HAVE CHILDREN IN THE UNIVERSITIES; THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT INHIBITION ON THE USE OF FORCE.

5. THE GROUP ALSO TRADED ANECDOTES WHICH WILL BECOME THE "STUFF OF LEGEND" FOR THESE RECENT DAYS:

- A 58 YEAR OLD MAN GAVE BLOOD AT THE SALAKLANG. HE SAID IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD EVER GIVEN BLOOD, BUT HE WANTED TO DO SO FOR THE STUDENTS. HUNDREDS OF POTENTIAL DONORS HAD TO BE TURNED AWAY.
- A POLICEMAN AT THE SALAKLANG, WHEN ASKED WHAT HE WOULD DO IF ORDERED TO SHOOT THE STUDENTS, REPLIED - "I WOULD SHOOT THE MAN GIVING THE ORDER."
- PEOPLE IN THE STREETS HANDED OUT MONEY TO THE STUDENTS UNTIL THEIR POCKETS WERE EMPTY.

6. THESE PEOPLE, AND OBVIOUSLY MANY OF THEIR ASSOCIATES, WERE DEEPLY MOVED BY RECENT EVENTS AND NOW LOOK FORWARD TO THAILAND'S POLITICAL FUTURE WITH SOME HOPE. LIKE MANY THAI, THEY HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES BYSTANDERS TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THEY MAY NOT HAVE LIKED THE THANOM REGIME, BUT WITH AN AIR OF BORED DIVISION THEY TOLERATED IT; UNTIL IT LAID HANDS ON THE STUDENTS.

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